

# Federal Defenders OF NEW YORK, INC.

Southern District  
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April 24, 2020

BY ECF

The Honorable William H. Pauley III  
United States District Court Judge  
Southern District of New York  
Daniel Patrick Moynihan  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street Courtroom 20B  
New York, New York 10007

**Re:     *United States v. Derrilyn Needham, 06cr0911-WHP-2***

Dear Judge Pauley:

We write to request emergency medical attention for our client, Derrilyn Needham. Ms. Needham is currently housed at MDC Brooklyn in the "old" or East Building, on an open dormitory, with approximately 30 other women.

Ms. Needham is experiencing acute symptoms of COVID-19: she has lost her sense of taste, she is dizzy and shaking during the day, and at night coughs frequently and feels like she is not getting enough oxygen when she is lying down. She has been feeling this way for almost 10 days. The Lieutenant who ordinarily works on the women's unit, Lieutenant Somerville, has recently been out sick and she understands from other unit staff that he has tested positive for COVID-19, and is afraid she may have contracted it from him, or from other staff.

As you know, this is particularly worrisome, given Ms. Needham's age (52) and her pre-existing medical conditions that include Raynaud's Disease, which is a circulatory disorder, severe migraines and Spina Bifida.

She has repeatedly requested medical care at MDC for these symptoms and has been told she probably "caught something," and needs to drink lots of tea and stay away from the other inmates. This is difficult to do, given that she is working as the primary laundry orderly, and washing bedding and towels for the whole unit on a daily basis, even while experiencing these symptoms. In addition, the medical staff has told her that because she does not have an elevated temperature, she cannot have COVID-19. Unfortunately, as this Court is likely aware, only some people who contract COVID-19 experience elevated temperatures, while others experience different symptoms, in

particular the loss of taste or smell, and a dry cough.

On Monday, Assistant Warden Flowers came to the unit for a town hall regarding COVID-19. During the town hall, Ms. Needham expressed to Assistant Warden Flowers that she is experiencing all of these symptoms and asked if she could get tested for COVID-19. Assistant Warden Flowers said no.

For her own health and safety, and that of the other inmates on the open dormitory, as well as the staff on her unit, we respectfully request that the Court order that she be brought to the hospital immediately for testing.

Respectfully submitted,

/s Jason I. Ser  
Jason I. Ser  
Assistant Federal Defender  
David Stern  
Counsel for Ms. Needham

cc: Laurie Korenbaum, A.U.S.A. (by email)